Usage of herbal medicine and over the counter medications among diabetic patients visiting a primary care clinic- do we need public awareness?

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Diabetic patients are more likely to use herbal medicine and over the counter medications because of the chronic course of the disease [1]. The use of herbal product has risen, whereas discussion of such use with medical professionals remains suboptimal [2]. As herbal medicines are used by increasing numbers of people, family physicians and pharmacists must be knowledgeable about their safety. This requires appreciation of the magnitude of use, as well as regulations under which the products are marketed that may affect their safety [3]. Diabetic patients spent almost as much money on over-the-counter supplements and alternative medications together as they did on their diabetic medications. One-third of diabetic patients are taking alternative medications that they consider efficacious [4]. The aim of this study was to highlight the usage of herbal medicine and over the counter medications among diabetic patients.

Cross sectional study carried out at outpatient primary care clinic, in a tertiary teaching hospital, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia during 2012. The Research has been approved from institutional review board ethical committee, King Khalid University hospital, college of Medicine, king Saud University, project number E-12-821. All diabetic patients visiting a primary care clinic was seen by a consultant family medicine and interviewed about their usage of herbal medicine and over the counter medications without con-

Table 2 Usage of over the counter medications among diabetic patients

Usage of over the counter medications	Frequency	Percentage
Used over the counter medications	12	12
Not used over the counter medications	88	88
Total	100	100

sulting their treating physician. Data was entered using Statistical package of social science version 17.

The present study showed that the number of diabetic patients who used herbal medicine without consulting their treating physicians was 17 % Table 1 (17 patients out of 100) and the number of diabetic patients who used over the counter medications without consulting their treating physicians was 12 % Table 2 (12 patients out of 100). Over the counter medications means any medications used without prescription from physician. In Conclusion: Diabetic patients need to be council, educate and convince about avoiding using over the counter medications and herbal medicine without consulting their treating physicians. Further community base study is recommended to study in depth why diabetic patients used herbal medicine and over the counter medications?

Table 1 Usage of herbal medicine among diabetic patients

Usage of herbal medicine	Frequency	Percentage
Used herbal medicine	17	17
Not used herbal medicine	83	83
Total	100	100

Conflicts of interest None.

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